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ABSTRACT

The federal Migrant Education Program provides supplemental instruction and other support services to migrant children. The program provides formula grants to states under Title I, Part C, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This document summarizes the data from a three-volume study, which examined how the program is helping migrant students succeed in school and meet academically challenging standards, and whether states and school districts are including migrant students in standards-based reforms. The three volumes represent three studies based on data on Title I schools, drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Schools; interviews with migrant program directors and records specialists in the nine states with the highest migrant enrollments; and case studies of sets of district migrant programs that share students. Title I schools serving migrant students are high-poverty, high-minority schools. Compared to other Title I schools, Title I schools serving migrant students had educators with lower expectations for student performance, had lower rates of student participation in advanced mathematics courses, and had more inexperienced teachers and teachers with temporary or no certification in their instructional area. Contrary to Title I requirements, many Title I schools serving migrant students used different standards for their limited-English proficient students. A significant percentage of migrant students participated in state or district assessments in 1997-98, but very few schools received results disaggregated by migrant status. On the other hand, some states and districts are implementing promising practices to promote continuity of instructional services for migrant students. (SV)

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Executive Summary

Volume I: Title I Schools Serving Migrant Students: Recent Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Schools

Volume II: Measurement of Migrant Student Educational Achievement

Volume III: Coordinating the Education of Migrant Students: Lessons Learned from the Field

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September 2002

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The Same HighStandards for Migrant Students: Holding Title I Schools Accountable

Executive Summary

Introduction

The three-volume study, *The Same High Standards for Migrant Students: Holding Title I Schools Accountable* examines how the federal Migrant Education Program (MEP) is helping migrant students succeed in school and meet academically challenging standards, and whether states and districts are including migrant students in standards-based reforms.

The study found that principals and teachers in Title I schools serving migrant students have lower expectations about how well their students can perform than teachers in other Title I schools. Fewer seniors in Title I schools with migrant students have taken higher-level mathematics courses compared with seniors in other schools. Title I schools with migrant students have higher percentages of inexperienced teachers, teachers who are teaching in fields for which they are not certified, as well as teachers who hold emergency or temporary certification. Many of the Title I schools that served migrant students used different standards for their limited English proficient students. A significant percentage of migrant students did participate in state or district assessments in the 1997-1998 school year, but few of these schools received the results of the assessments disaggregated by migrant status. Some states and school districts are implementing promising practices to promote continuity of instructional services for migrant students to respond to the effects caused by changing schools on students' academic performance.

Key Findings: A Summary

- **Expectations about student performance were low in Title I schools serving migrant students.** Some principals in Title I elementary schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students reported that standards were too hard for a significant portion of their students, and that a large percentage of these students were not prepared to do the work at the next grade level. This finding is similar to National Longitudinal Survey of Schools (NLSS) findings concerning differences between the highest-poverty and lower-poverty Title I elementary schools.

- **Many of the Title I schools that served migrant students used different standards for their limited English proficient students.** Many migrant students are also limited English proficient. Over half of the Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students are classified as schools with 25 percent or more limited English proficient students. Contrary to the requirements of the Title I program, principals in Title I elementary schools reported that their schools used alternate state

content standards and different student performance standards for limited English proficient students.

- **States' knowledge of migrant student participation in assessments was weak.** States reported that they did not have a way to estimate the percentage of migrant students participating in assessments because the number of students exempted from assessments is typically a local decision that is often not reported to the state. Based on national survey data, principals reported that 70 percent of migrant elementary students and 90 percent of migrant secondary students participated in assessments in the 1998-1999 school year. Mobility and language difficulties were the two leading barriers to migrant students' participation in statewide assessments.

- **Few schools with migrant students received disaggregated achievement scores.** The single greatest barrier to evaluating migrant student achievement data systems is the lack of capacity that most state and local data systems currently have to link individual migrant student records with state and district databases. Few states pursue data on graduation and dropout rates because of the investment of resources involved, and because they are not legislatively required to do so.

- **Fewer students in Title I schools that serve migrant students were enrolled in higher-level courses.** Fewer seniors in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students had taken higher-level mathematics courses compared with seniors in other Title I schools.

- **Teachers in schools serving migrants were less experienced.** Teachers in Title I elementary schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students had fewer years of teaching experience than teachers in other Title I elementary schools. These schools also reported that more teachers were teaching in fields for which they were not certified and held emergency or temporary certification. Many of these differences were similar to those between highest- and lower-poverty schools.

- **Title I schools with migrant students tend to be much poorer, and have high proportions of students who are minorities and limited English proficient.** Many of the differences between Title I schools with no or few migrant students and schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students parallel the differences between Title I schools that are relatively lower in poverty and those that are highest-poverty.

- **A few states and school districts are committed to aligning local instruction between programs that share migrant students.** In particular, these states and districts were committed to aligning with the students' home base schools for curricular content and course requirements. Some examples of alignment policies included the following: LEP students were placed in the same type of English acquisition program as their home base school; trading partners compared their individual languages assessments scores to place migrant students in the same types of course work; and trading partners agreed on common grade placement policies.

- **Technology is enabling states and districts to access other states' and districts' content and performance standards.** The use of technology provided solutions to the problems of accessing information and providing instruction to difficult-to-reach students. Technology was used to transfer information on students' academic records between trading partners, provide individualized instruction, and provide access to another state or district's assessments and standards.

Background

In recognition of the unique needs of migrant students, the Migrant Education Program was first authorized in 1966 to provide supplemental instruction and other support services for migrant children. The program currently operates under Title I, Part C, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended in 2002, and provides formula grants to states to ensure that migrant students' needs are met. MEP funding is in addition to other Title I funds that schools may receive. State education agencies (SEAs) generally administer services to migrant students provided by schools, districts, and other organizations. The program's primary purpose is to help migrant students succeed in school and have the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and performance standards that all children are expected to meet.

NLSS provided nationally representative data for the analyses of Volume I, which were based on surveys of principals and teachers in Title I schools that served migrant students in the 1998-1999 school year. As such, it is a snapshot in time, one school year after states were to have developed challenging content and performance standards for all students.

Schools were classified into Title I schools with no migrant students, Title I schools with low numbers of migrant students (those with fewer than 15 migrant students), and Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students (those with 15 or more migrant students). The data are based on principal reports about the number of migrant students in the school. The samples included 747 schools with no migrant students, 164 schools with low numbers of migrant students, and 155 schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students. Schools serving low and medium-to-high numbers of migrant students sometimes were combined into one group, Title I schools with migrant students.

NLSS collected data over three school years from 1998-1999 to 2000-2001. School-year 1998-1999 established a baseline of data on how these Title I schools were implementing the accountability provisions of Title I of the ESEA, as amended, related to high standards and assessments for all children.

Data for Volume II were collected through interviews with migrant program directors and data and assessment records specialists at state and local levels during site visits between October 2000 and January 2001. These were, in descending order by population: California, Texas, Florida, Washington, Oregon, Kentucky, Kansas, Arizona and Georgia. These nine states accounted for approximately 70 percent of the nation's

migrant student population in 1998-1999. The director of each state's migrant education selected districts that were supposed to be around the twenty-fifth percentile in terms of the size of the migrant student population and also were supposed to be representative or average in terms of migrant education practices.

Data for Volume III were collected through case studies of district migrant education programs, chosen on the basis of nominations from state directors. Four groups of two or three districts that share students who move back and forth between them were chosen for study (referred to as Trading Partners). A member of the research team visited each site between June 1998 and December 1998. The researchers conducted interviews with lay staff; observed service delivery and coordination mechanisms; and inspected relevant documents, which included available achievement data.

Volume I, *Title I Schools Serving Migrant Students: Recent Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Schools,* addresses two basic questions:

(1) How do Title I schools with high numbers of migrant students compare with Title I schools with no migrant students in terms of their social, demographic, and organizational characteristics? and
(2) How are standards-based reforms and the provisions of Title I being implemented in Title I schools with migrant students compared with Title I schools with no migrant students?

Volume II, *Measurement of Migrant Student Educational Achievement,* addresses five questions:

(1) What assessment and accountability data are collected on migrant student achievement?
(2) What data are available on migrant student graduation and dropout rates?
(3) What other types of data are routinely collected on migrant student achievement? Is information collected on postsecondary outcomes?
(4) What is the overall quality of the data on migrant students? and
(5) What steps can states and districts take to improve the quality and availability of data on migrant student outcomes?

Volume III, *Coordinating the Education of Migrant Students: Lessons Learned from the Field,* addresses six questions:

1) What were the conditions that led to discontinuity of education for migrant students?
2) What were the problems, issues, and concerns at the school site level that resulted from discontinuity of education?
3) How and why was a particular approach adopted as a strategy to promote continuity of education?

4) What range of approaches are used in migrant education programs to promote continuity of education for migrant students, and how are those approaches implemented?
5) What impact have these innovations demonstrated, and what problems or obstacles were encountered in implementing these approaches?
6) What cross-cutting themes emerged from the study?

Volume I of the study was conducted by Westat and RAND, Volume II was conducted by the Research Triangle Institute, and Volume III was conducted by the George Washington University's Center for Equity and Excellence in Education, under contract to the Planning and Evaluation Service of the U.S. Department of Education.

Key Findings: In Detail

High Standards for All Children

The 1994 amendments to the ESEA required states to develop or adopt, by the beginning of the 1997-98 school year, challenging state content standards in at least reading or language arts and math. State content standards specify what all children in the state are expected to know and be able to do. Challenging performance standards show the level children that will be expected to attain in mastering the material in the content standards. Whether standards apply statewide or districtwide, *all* students within that state or district must be held to the same challenging standards. *All* students, including economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students, and students with diverse learning needs are expected to learn the same high-quality content, rather than a separate curriculum for certain students. Initially, limited English proficient students may take more time to meet the state's standards because they also must develop English language proficiency. In such cases, additional benchmarks toward meeting standards need to be developed to assess limited English proficient students' progress, but the essential content and performance standards are to apply to all students.

Some principals in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students reported that "content and performance standards were too rigorous" for most of their students. In the 1998-1999 school year, principals in Title I schools were asked about the extent to which content and performance standards were too rigorous for most of their students. The response options ranged from "not at all" to "a great extent." Eleven percent of principals in Title I elementary schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students stated that content standards were, to a great extent, "too rigorous" for most of their students, compared with only 3 percent of principals in Title I elementary schools with low numbers of migrant students. These findings are similar to NLSS findings concerning differences between highest-poverty and lowest-poverty Title I elementary schools. Fourteen percent of the highest-poverty elementary school principals reported that such standards were too rigorous for most of their students, compared with less than 2 percent of the lowest-poverty school principals; even larger differences exist among secondary schools (30 percent versus less than 1 percent).

Principals perceived that fewer students in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students were prepared to do work at the next grade level than were students in other Title I schools. All principals in Title I schools were asked, at the end of the 1997-1998 school year, what percent of their students were prepared to do work at the next grade level. Principals in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students reported that about 76 percent of elementary students and 64 percent of secondary students were prepared to work at the next grade level. Principals in Title I schools with no migrant students or low numbers of migrant students believed that 82-84 percent of their students were ready for the next grade.

Figure 1. Principals' Perceptions about Student Performance, Title I Schools, by School Level And Migrant Status of School

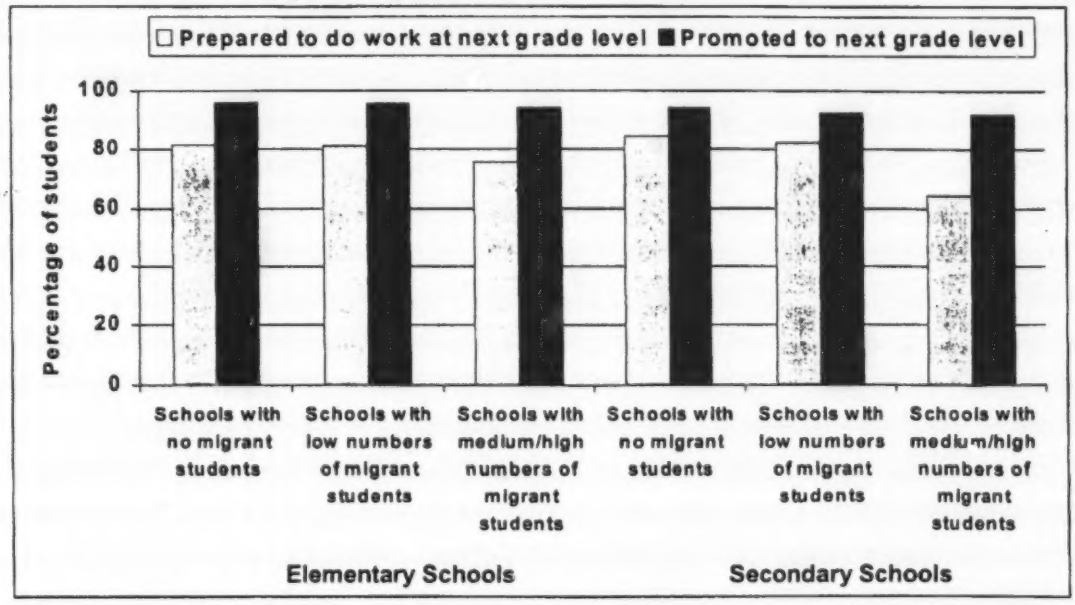

Figure reads: Principals in Title I elementary schools with no migrant students reported that 81.8 percent of students in these schools were prepared to do work at the next grade level but 96.2 percent of students were promoted to the next grade level.
Source: NLSS Principal Survey, SY1998-1999, Section B, Q. PB9, PB10

Many schools used alternate content standards and different performance standards for limited English proficient students. Principals in Title I schools were asked whether their school used alternate content standards that accommodate limited English proficient students' need to acquire English language skills, and whether they use different performance standards for these students. Almost 80 percent of the principals in Title I elementary schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students reported that their school used alternate standards in reading to accommodate limited English proficient students. Sixty-one percent of the principals in Title I schools with no migrant students reported using alternate content standards in reading to accommodate limited English proficient students. Forty-five percent of principals in Title I elementary schools

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serving medium-to-high numbers of migrant students reported that they used different performance standards for limited English proficient students, while 31 percent of principals in Title I elementary schools with no migrant students reported that they did so.

Assessments and Accountability for All Children

The 1994 amendments also required states to develop or adopt, by the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year, high-quality yearly assessments in at least reading or language arts and math. The assessments are to be aligned with the state's content and performance standards that determine how well all children are learning. *All* children participating in the Title I program must be assessed, including students with disabilities and limited English proficient students, using the same assessments used by the state or local education agency to measure the performance of all children. Including migrant students in state assessments is important to achieve ESEA's goals that all children achieve to high content and performance standards. Each Title I school and district is required to demonstrate adequate yearly progress toward helping participating children to meet the state's challenging performance standards.

States' knowledge of migrant student participation in assessments was weak. In the 2000-2001 site visits, only two of the nine states visited were able to provide estimates of the proportion of migrant students participating in state assessments. State officials reported during the site visits that the lack of standardized methods for identifying the migrant status of students for assessment purposes increased the likelihood of errors and erroneous reporting of disaggregated results. Similarly, school districts and states participating in the site visits had not developed data systems to report the types of accommodations provided for assessment purposes or the numbers of students receiving such accommodations. However, in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students, principals reported that 70 percent of elementary migrant students and 90 percent of secondary migrant students participated in these assessments in the 1997-1998 school year. In schools with low numbers of migrant students, the participation rate was about 60 percent. The main reasons that migrant students did not participate in the assessments were: lack of English proficiency, lack of instruments in the student's native language, individualized education program (IEP) exclusion, and lack of sufficient enrollment time.

Eight of the nine states participating in site visits allowed schools to exempt students from assessments based on lack of English language proficiency alone, but were unable to estimate how many migrant students are affected by these policies as none of the states that allow exemptions kept records. Of the nine states, only California did not exclude students from assessments for reasons related to language proficiency, although they allowed a second test to be taken in Spanish. In some states, migrant personnel were not fully aware of state assessment policies.

States and schools participating in the site visits reported that student mobility and language difficulties were the two leading barriers to migrant students' participation in statewide assessments. Migrant students travel at different times of the year, including during testing times, and they may be tested in a state other than their home state, or they may miss being assessed altogether. Some states serving large populations of migrant students, such as California and Florida, reported that most of their students move within the state. While this still creates disruptions in a student's education, it means that more migrant students can be tested against their home state's standards. Only one state, Texas, had accommodations that specifically addressed migrant student mobility. Texas made an agreement with 21 other states to allow Texas-based students to take the exit-level Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) exam. However, many states in the sites visited considered language to be a greater problem for migrant students than mobility. Limited English proficiency was repeatedly noted as the largest challenge to migrant student participation in statewide assessments. All nine states and districts studied reported making some type of accommodation related to language, including the allowance of secondary assessments in the student's native language. State personnel interviewed during the site visits felt that using assessments as part of an accountability system has the potential to provide a strong disincentive for administrators to make extra efforts to ensure participation by all populations, and might actually lead school-level staff to discourage migrant students from participating because of accountability concerns.

Reporting Progress on All Student Groups

States are required to provide state assessment data that are disaggregated for a variety of student subgroups in all schools and LEAs, if the data are statistically sound and final assessments are in place. However, states were not required to have final assessments in place until the 2000-2001 school year. Consequently, when these data were collected, this requirement was not in place.

Few Title I schools with migrant students received disaggregated achievement scores. Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students were somewhat more likely to receive assessment results disaggregated by race and ethnicity, Title I participation, and poverty status, compared with other Title I schools, and these differences were statistically significant. Still, only one-quarter of Title I elementary schools with low numbers of migrant students and one-third with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students received results disaggregated by migrant status. Eight of the nine states participating in the site visits reported having the ability to disaggregate assessment results by migrant status, but only five did so on a regular basis. Interviews with state officials indicated that the lack of data on the number of migrant students not tested, exempted, or tested with accommodations leaves migrant staff relatively uninformed about the extent to which these students are included in state assessment systems.

Figure 2. Percentage of Elementary School Principals in Title I Schools Receiving Assessment Results Summarized by Subgroups of Students, by Migrant Status of School

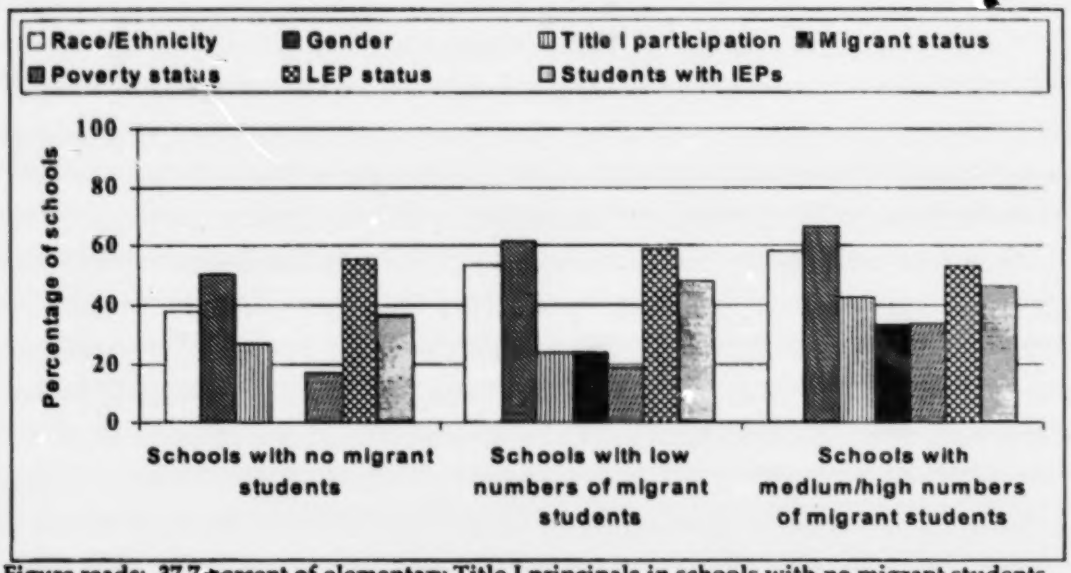

Figure reads: 37.7 percent of elementary Title I principals in schools with no migrant students reported receiving assessment results disaggregated by race and ethnicity; 50.7 percent by gender; 27 percent by Title I participation; 0 percent by migrant status; 16.8 percent by poverty status; 55.4 percent by LEP status; and 36.9 percent by students had IEPs.

Source: NLSS Principal Survey, SY1998-1999, Section A, Q.PA26

Notes: Question asked of principals who reported that their school uses a math or reading assessment. Question regarding migrant status and LEP status were asked only of principals who reported that their school contains a certain level of the special population (any migrant students or 10 percent or more LEP students).

The use of separate databases within states often prevented the linking of migrant students' assessment data with other academic information, such as grades, attendance, graduation rates, etc., and was the single greatest barrier to evaluating migrant student achievement more accurately. Site visit reports indicated that few states pursued data on student achievement and graduation rates because of the investment of resources involved and because they were not required to do so by the federal government. According to site visit data, the single practice that plagued the availability of migrant student data was the storing of assessment data separately from databases containing migrant information and school information, such as attendance and graduation data. Data systems within states often were not linked with other parts of systems that store migrant student information. States reported that they did not have reliable mechanisms to track students who enroll in another district or take up another form of education, such as GED classes. The same was true of tracking students after graduation to collect postsecondary information. Most states were in the process of large-scale adjustments to their data systems, so the picture may have changed.

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Seven of nine states reported during site visits that they had the capability to produce estimates of graduation rates, and six states would be able to calculate dropout rates among migrant students. However, most states reported not calculating such rates, largely because they were not required for federal reporting purposes. Dropout rates are particularly problematic because migrant students move frequently and schools are often left unaware of their status.

Title I schools with migrant students appeared to be making greater efforts to involve parents both at school and at home, compared with Title I schools with no migrant students. The vast majority of principals in all Title I schools reported sharing school documents with parents. Principals in schools with migrant students, especially in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students, were much more likely to translate school documents into languages other than English for parents with limited English proficiency. Although each school that receives Title I funds is required to develop a school-parent compact, not all schools have developed and implemented them. Compared with principals and teachers in Title I schools with no migrant students, principals and teachers in schools with migrant students were more likely to report using school-parent compacts and to report finding them useful in discussing shared responsibilities among the parents and students.

Curriculum and Teaching

Supporting the achievement of challenging state content standards and challenging student performance standards for all students requires effective instruction, good teacher professional development, appropriate materials development, and family involvement.

The differences between the typical mathematics courses that graduating seniors have taken were striking. Generally, fewer seniors in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students have taken higher-level mathematics courses compared with seniors in other schools. Many of these differences reflect differences found between high-poverty and low-poverty Title I schools. Over 90 percent of seniors in Title I schools with no or low numbers of migrant students have taken Algebra 1 compared with less than 60 percent in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students. Similarly, 60 percent of students in the first group have taken Algebra 2, while less than 30 percent in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students have done so.

Figure 3. Percentage of Graduating Seniors in Title I High Schools That Have Taken Selected Courses in Mathematics, by Migrant Status of School

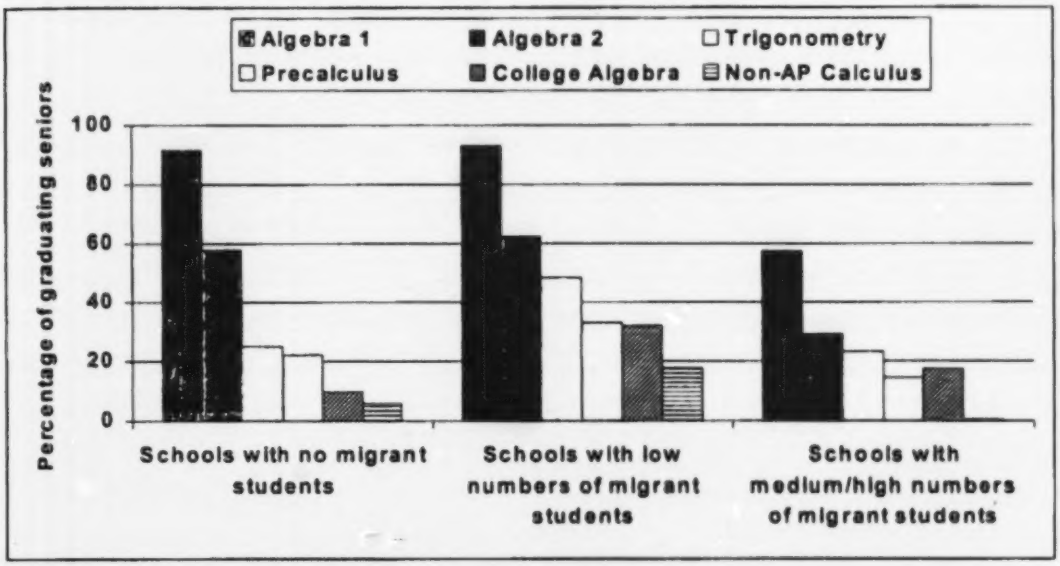

Figure reads: Mathematics chairpersons in Title I high schools with no migrant students reported that 91.6 percent of graduating seniors have taken Algebra 1; 58.1 percent have taken Algebra 2; 25.4 percent Trigonometry; 22.3 percent Precalculus; 9.8 percent College Algebra; and 6.2 percent Non-AP Calculus, prior to graduation.

Source: NLSS Teacher Survey, SY1998-1999, Section B, Q. TB11

Note: Question asked of high school mathematics chairs.

Teachers in schools serving migrants were less experienced. Title I elementary schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students reported higher percentages of inexperienced teachers than other Title I schools. In addition, Title I elementary schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students reported that more teachers were teaching in fields for which they were not certified and held emergency or temporary certification. Many of these differences are similar to the differences found by poverty status among all Title I schools. For example, principals in the highest-poverty schools reported that between 15 and 21 percent of their teachers had less than three years of teaching experience compared with only 8-to-9 percent of low-poverty schools.

Teachers who taught migrant students reported that they would have liked to receive professional development in instructional strategies to teach migrant students. Sixty-five to 70 percent of teachers who taught migrant students, in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students, reported receiving no professional development in instructional strategies to teach migrant students, although most of these teachers (60 percent of elementary teachers and 84 percent of secondary teachers) reported that they would have liked professional development in this area.

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Figure 4. Percentage of Teachers in Title I Schools Reporting They Would Have Liked Professional Development in Instructional Strategies to Teach Migrant Students, by Migrant Status of School

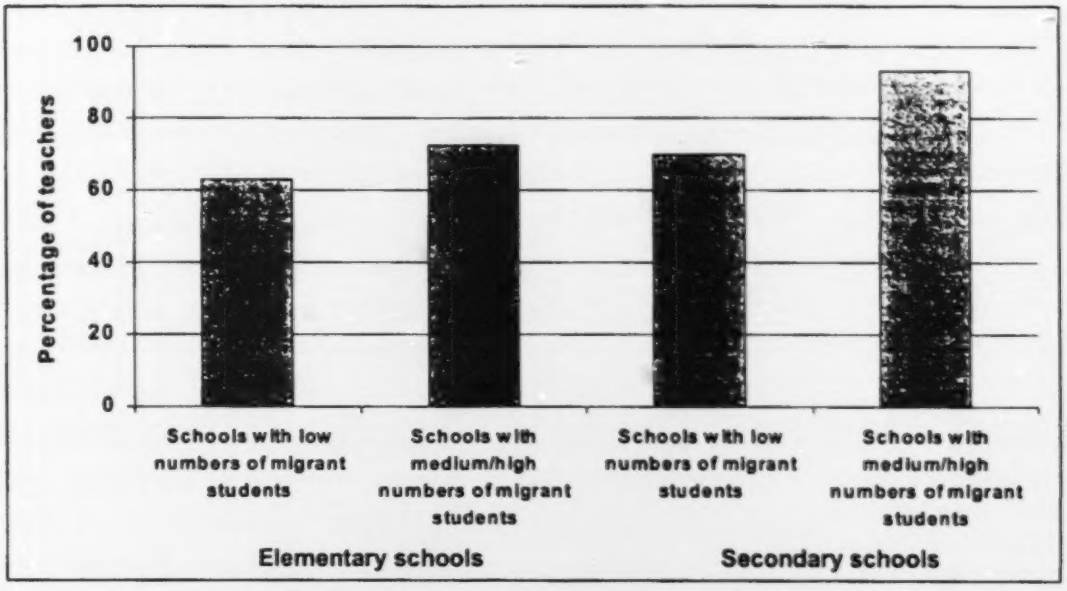

Figure reads: Among teachers of migrant students who wanted additional professional development, 63.1 percent of teachers in Title I schools with low numbers of migrant students reported they would have liked professional development in instructional strategies to teach migrant students.
Source: NLSS Teacher Survey, SY1998-1999, Section D, Q. TD5

Teachers lack of knowledge about how to integrate technology into the curriculum was a major barrier in using technology for instructional purposes. Over 70 percent of all Title I schools reported that this was a major barrier. Other significant barriers were lack of software that is integrated with the school's curriculum and insufficient equipment, especially for schools serving migrant students. Principals in secondary schools with migrant students were especially likely to report barriers to using technology for instructional purposes.

Although all Title I schools used teacher aides, the proportion that funded them through Title I was higher in Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students compared with Title I schools with no migrant students. In addition, Title I schools with migrant students were more likely to be located in districts offering career ladders and other educational supports to paraprofessionals.

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Profile of Title I Schools Serving Migrant Students

Many of the differences between Title I schools with no or low numbers of migrant students and Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students were similar to differences found by poverty status of all Title I schools. A majority of schools with migrant status are high-poverty schools, and differences reported here cannot be solely attributed to the migrant status of the school. Sample sizes did not permit analysis of the degree to which poverty and migrant status contribute independently to the differences reported here.

Title I schools with migrant students tend to be much poorer than Title I schools with no migrant students. High-poverty schools are defined as schools with 50 percent or more of their students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Three-quarters of Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students and two-thirds of Title I schools with low numbers of migrant students are high-poverty schools, compared with less than half (46 percent) of Title I schools with no migrant students. Overall, 87 percent of migrant students were enrolled in high-poverty schools.

Figure 5. Distribution of Title I Schools Categorized by Migrant Status of School, and Percentage of Poor and Minority Students

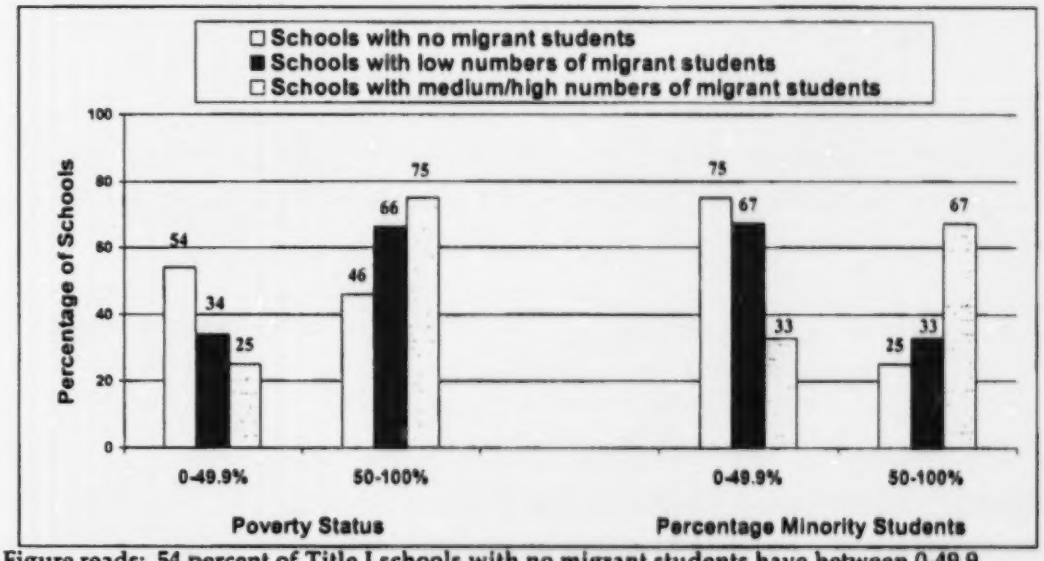

Figure reads: 54 percent of Title I schools with no migrant students have between 0-49.9 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches compared with 34 percent of Title I schools with low numbers of migrant students and 25 percent of Title I schools with medium/high numbers of migrant students.

Source: NLSS Principal Survey, SY1998-1999, Section Principal Screener, Q. PSC3 and Common Core of Data, 1997-98

Title I schools with migrant students also tend to be high-minority schools. High minority schools are schools that serve 50 percent or more minority students. Two-thirds of Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students are high-

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minority schools, compared with one-quarter of Title I schools with no migrant students. About 61 percent of Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students are both high-poverty and high-minority schools.

Many migrant students were also limited English proficient (LEP). Just over half (51 percent) of the Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students are classified as schools with 25 percent of more limited English proficient students, compared with 12 percent of the Title I schools with low numbers of migrant students and 7 percent of the Title I schools with no migrant students.

A significant percentage of high-poverty Title I schools serving medium-to-high numbers of migrant students have not availed themselves of the schoolwide option and continue to offer targeted assistance to their Title I students. Under the 1994 reauthorization of Title I, schools could adopt schoolwide programs if 50 percent or more of their students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Schoolwide programs allow Title I funds to be used on comprehensive programs that benefit all students in the school, not just children identified for Title I services. Fifty-seven percent of Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students operated schoolwide programs in school year 1998-1999. Among Title I schools with medium-to-high numbers of migrant students and at the 50-to-100 percent poverty level, 32 percent were operating targeted assistance programs.

Certain conditions led to educational discontinuity for migrant students. Differences in school curriculum requirements and instructional methods between districts and schools sharing migrant students led to instructional discontinuity and credit accrual problems for secondary migrant students. However, states and districts that are implementing information systems and aligning policies are helping to promote the continuity of education for migrant students.

Summary

The U.S. Department of Education's Planning and Evaluation Service sponsored these three studies to examine whether states and schools are including migrant students in their assessment and accountability systems. The results were mixed.

Title I schools that serve migrant students are high-poverty, high-minority schools. These same schools have higher percentages of inexperienced teachers, teachers who are teaching in fields for which they are not certified, as well as teachers who hold emergency or temporary certification. A significant number of teachers who taught migrant students received no professional development in instructional strategies to teach these students, although most of these teachers reported that they would have liked professional development in this area. Principals and teachers in Title I schools serving migrant students tend to have lower expectations about how well their students can perform than teachers in other Title I schools. Generally, fewer seniors in Title I schools with migrant students have taken higher-level mathematics courses compared with seniors in other schools.

Many of the Title I schools that served migrant students used alternate content standards and different performance standards for their limited English proficient students. Eight of the nine states participating in site visits allowed schools to exempt students from assessments based on lack of English language proficiency alone. **This finding is contrary to the Title I requirements that all students should be held to the same standards and participate in the same assessments.**

However, survey data indicated that a significant percentage of migrant students participated in state or district assessments in the 1997-1998 school year, but very few of these schools received the results of the assessments disaggregated by migrant status. During the 2000-2001 site visits, most states reported that while estimates are not regularly calculated on the percentage of eligible migrant students actually participating in such assessments, they are able to disaggregate their data and compare migrant student performance to that of all students or to non migrant students. States appear to be making progress in this area.

Significantly less data are available to measure any other type of academic outcome, including graduation, dropout, and postsecondary information, and there are significant concerns about including all migrant students in these statistics. In general, larger states are more likely than smaller states to have the systems that would allow them to produce more achievement data. States vary in their ability to gather and evaluate migrant student data. None of the states participating in the site visits funds a full-time migrant staff position dedicated to reviewing migrant data and evaluating program effectiveness and migrant student academic achievement.

The lack of data on the number of migrant students not tested, exempted, or tested with accommodations leaves migrant staff relatively uninformed about the extent to which these students are included in state assessment systems. The use of separate databases within states often prevents linking migrant students' assessment data with other academic information, such as grades, attendance, graduation rates, and other outcome indicators, and is the single greatest barrier to evaluating migrant student achievement more accurately.

Despite the many challenges facing states, and districts, and schools to provide a high-quality education to migrant students, the districts identified in "Coordinating the Education of Migrant Students: Lessons Learned from the Field," demonstrate promising practices used by districts to promote continuity of instructional service for migrant students. The study entailed case studies of district migrant education programs, chosen on the basis of nominations from state directors. Four groups of two or three districts that share students who move back and forth between them were chosen for study (referred to as Trading Partners). Examples of promising practices used in these districts include:

- The districts implemented information systems including the Texas Migrant Interstate Project, the New Generation System, the Red Bag Transfer Packet System, and an e-mail system to improve student information exchange and

access. These systems relied on a combination of information technologies and technical assistance and staff support.

- To promote secondary credit accrual, particular staff members were charged with communicating with other districts to determine appropriate courses for credit accrual purposes, calculating and awarding partial credit, and following up on attendance data, grades and credit accrual information sent to other districts.

- Two basic strategies were used in developing supplemental educational opportunities. The first strategy entails flexible courses of study that assist secondary students to accelerate course completion or to finish incomplete courses. The newest versions of these courses use technology (e.g. desktop computer labs, portable laptop computers, and satellite technology) to deliver instruction. The second strategy provided migrant students with additional instructional time, either in the summer, in the evening, or during the school day.

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